STENDHAL

(MARIE-HENRI BEYLE)

1783–1842

THE PHILTRE

ON a sombre, rainy night in the summer of 1823 a young lieutenant of the 96th Regiment, garrisoned at Bordeaux, withdrew from the café where he had lost nearly all his money. He cursed his folly, for he was poor.

He was walking quietly down one of the loneliest streets of the Lormond district, when suddenly he heard cries, and from a door that was noisily flung open, a woman escaped and ran and fell at his feet. So thick was the darkness he could not guess what was happening, save by the sounds about him. The men who were pursuing the woman, whoever they were, stopped in the doorway, apparently on hearing the steps of the young officer.

He listened a moment. The men spoke in whispers, but did not come up to him. Though the affair only filled him with disgust, Lieven thought it his duty to lift up the woman who had fallen before him.

He saw that she had only a chemise on. In spite of the profound darkness of the night—it was then about two o'clock in the morning—he dimly saw her long, unloosened hair. So it was a woman. The discovery by no means pleased him.

She seemed unable to walk without help. Lieven had need to call to mind his ideas of duty towards one's fellow-creatures, in order to prevent himself from leaving her. He saw himself appearing the next morning before a police magistrate. There would be jests from his fellow-officers, and satirical stories in the newspapers of the town.

"I must put her against the door of some house," he said to himself, "and ring the bell, and then get away as fast as I can."

He was preparing to do this, when he heard the woman moan some words in Spanish. He did not know a word of the language. Perhaps that was why the two very simple words that Leonora spoke stirred in him the most romantic feeling. He saw no longer a police magistrate, and a girl of the streets beaten by some drunken

brutes. His imagination soared away into ideas of love and strange adventures.

Having lifted the woman up, Lieven began to speak to her and tried to console her. "But was she ugly?" he asked himself. The doubt on this point brought his reason into play, and made him forget his romantic ideas. Lieven wished to get her to sit down on a doorstep; she refused to do so.

"Let us go farther on," she said, with a foreign accent.

"Are you afraid of your husband?" said Lieven.

"Alas! I have left my husband, a most worthy man who worshipped me, for a lover who has treated me worse than a savage."

Lieven again forgot the police magistrate and all the unpleasant sequels to a night adventure.

"I have been robbed, sir," said Leonora, a few moments afterwards, "but I see I still have a little diamond ring. Perhaps some inn-keeper will give me shelter. But, sir, I should be the talk of the place, for I will admit to you I have only a chemise on me. Sir, I beg you, in the name of humanity, to find me some sort of room, and buy any kind of rough dress for me from some working woman. As soon as I was properly clad," she added, encouraged by the silence of the young officer, "you could take me to the door of some small inn. There I would cease to rely on your generosity, and beg you only to leave a most unhappy woman."

All this, spoken in bad French, was rather pleasant to Lieven.

"Madame," he answered, "I will do all that you want me. The main thing, however, for you and me is not to get ourselves arrested. I am Lieutenant Lieven of the 96th Regiment. If we meet a patrol, and the men are not of my regiment, they will take us to the guardhouse, where we shall have to pass the night; and to-morrow you and I, madame, will be the talk of Bordeaux."

Lieven felt Leonora shiver as she leant on his arm.

"This horror of scandal is a good sign," he thought to himself. "Please take my coat," he said to the lady. "I will conduct you to my room."

"Oh, sir, sir. . . ."

"I will leave you absolute mistress of my room, and I will not appear there until to-morrow morning. But my orderly comes at six o'clock, and he is a man who will knock until the door is opened. I am a man of honour, madame. But is she pretty?" he asked himself.

He opened the door of his house. The unknown lady almost fell at the bottom of the stairs, where she could not find the first step. Lieven spoke to her in whispers. She answered him also in a low voice.

"How dare you bring women into my house!" cried the shrill-

voiced, pretty landlady, coming out with a little lamp.

Lieven turned quickly towards his unknown lady, saw an admirable figure, and blew out the lamp.

"Silence, Madame Saucède, or to-morrow morning I leave you! This lady is the wife of the Colonel, and I am not sleeping here to-night. Here are ten francs for you, if you keep a silent tongue in your head!"

Lieven had reached the third floor; at the door of his room he trembled.

"Enter, madame," he said to the lady. "There are phosphorus matches just by the clock. Light the candle, and make a good fire, and bolt the door from the inside. I respect you as if you were my sister, and when I come in the morning I will bring a dress."

"Jesus Maria!" cried the lovely Spanish lady.

When Lieven knocked at the door the next morning, he was madly in love. In order not to wake his unknown lady too soon, he had had the patience to wait for his orderly at the door, and to go into a café and sign the papers brought to him. He had taken a room close by, and he brought clothes with him and also a mask.

"Thus, madame," he said through the door, "I shall not see you if you so desire."

The idea of the mask pleased the young Spanish woman, distracting her from her deep melancholy.

"You are so generous," she said, without opening the door, "that I will be bold enough to beg you to leave the parcel of clothing outside. When I hear you descend, I will take it."

"Adieu, madame," said Lieven, going away.

Leonora was so charmed by the promptitude with which he obeyed her that she said to him in almost the tones of the most tender friendship, "If you can, sir, come back in half an hour."

When he returned, Lieven found her masked; but he saw she had lovely arms, a beautiful neck and delicate hands. He was delighted. He was a young man of good birth, who still had need to force himself to act with courage with women he loved. His tone was respectful, and he did the honours of his poor little room with such grace, that, turning round after having arranged the screen, he stood motionless with admiration before the most beautiful woman he had ever met. The foreign lady had taken off her mask. She had black eyes that seemed to speak. There was so much energy in them that they might have appeared hard in the ordinary circumstances of life. Despair gave them a little sympathy, and nothing was wanting to the beauty of Leonora. Lieven thought she was from eighteen to twenty years of age. There was a moment of silence. In spite of her deep grief, Leonora could not help remarking with some pleasure the rapture

of the young officer, who seemed to her to move in good society.

" You are my benefactor," she said at last to him, " and in spite of your age and mine, I hope you will continue to respect me."

Lieven answered as the most passionate lover can ; but he was sufficiently master of himself to refrain from the pleasure of saying he loved her. Besides, the eyes of Leonora were so impressive, and she had so distinguished an air, despite the poorness of the dress she had just put on, that he had less trouble in acting prudently.

" One might as well be a complete ass," he said to himself.

He gave himself up to his shyness and to the heavenly pleasure of looking at Leonora, without saying anything to her. He could not have done better. Little by little the beautiful Spanish woman regained her confidence. It was very droll, sitting opposite one another and staring silently.

" I must get a hat like that of a working woman," she said, " which will hide my face. For, unhappily," she added, almost laughing, " I cannot use your mask in the street."

Lieven found a hat, and then took Leonora to the room he had rented for her. She redoubled his agitation and almost his happiness by saying to him :

" All this may end for me on the gallows ! "

" To serve you," said Lieven, with the greatest impetuosity, " I would throw myself in the fire. I have taken this room in the name of Madame Lieven, my wife."

" Your wife ! " said the Spanish girl, almost angry.

" You had to appear under this name or show a passport. And we have no passport."

The " we " gave him a thrill of happiness. He had sold the ring, or at least he gave the lady a hundred francs as its value. Lunch was brought in. She asked him to be seated.

" You have shown yourself the most generous of men," she said after lunch. " If you like you can leave me now. My heart will preserve an eternal gratitude for you."

" I will obey you," said Lieven, rising.

There was the pain of death in his heart. The unknown lady was very thoughtful, then she said :

" Remain. You are very young, but I need help, and where shall I find a man as generous as you are ? Besides, if you have a feeling for me of which I am unworthy, the story of my faults will soon make me lose your esteem, and take away all your interest in the most criminal of women. For, sir, I have done great wrong. I can complain of no one, and least of all of my husband, Don Gutier Ferrandez. He is one of those unhappy Spaniards who sought a refuge in France two years ago. We are both of us from Carthagena. But he is very rich and I am very poor.

" ' I am thirty years older than you, my dear Leonora,' he said

to me, on the eve of our marriage, 'but I have some millions of money and I love you to madness. Look at the matter and decide for yourself. If my age makes the marriage disagreeable to you I will make your people think I am responsible for breaking it off.'

"That was four years ago. I was fifteen. What I felt most keenly then was the profound poverty into which my family had fallen in the Revolution. I did not love him, but I accepted him. Sir, I have need of your advice, for I do not know the ways of this country nor your language, as you can see. Did I not need your help so badly, I could not support the shame that is killing me. Last night, when you saw me driven from a poor tenement, you must have thought it was a woman of evil reputation whom you were helping. Sir, I am still worse than that. I am the most criminal and also the most unhappy of women," added Leonora, bursting into tears. "One of these days you will perhaps see me brought before your judges, and I shall be condemned to some ignominious punishment. Scarcely was I married when Don Gutier began to be jealous. Ah, heavens! it was then without grounds. But no doubt he saw I had a bad charcter. I was so foolish as to be irritated by my husband's suspicions. Ah, unhappy woman!"

"No matter what your crimes are," said Lieven, interrupting her, "I am devoted to you to death. But if we are likely to be pursued by the police, tell me about it quickly, so that I can arrange for your flight without loss of time."

"Flight!" she said to him. "How can I travel in France? My Spanish accent, my youth, my agitation, will lead to my arrest by the first policeman who asks for my passport. Doubtless the police of Bordeaux are searching for me at this moment. My husband will have promised them handfuls of gold if they succeed in finding me. Leave me, sir, abandon me! I will speak more boldly to you. I adore a man who is not my husband—and what a man! He is a monster. You will despise him. Yet he has only to send me a kind word, and I will fall, I will not say into his arms, but at his feet. In the depths of shame in which I find myself, I do not want at least to deceive my benefactor. I am an unhappy woman, sir, who admires you, who is very grateful to you, but never can I love you."

Lieven became very sad.

"Do not mistake my sudden grief, madame," he said in a feeble voice, "for an intention to leave you. I am thinking how you can avoid the pursuit of the police. Perhaps the best way is to remain concealed in Bordeaux. Later I can arrange for you to take the place of a woman of your age for whom I will book a passage on some ship."

The light died out of Lieven's eyes as he finished speaking.

"Don Gutier Ferrandez," continued Leonora, "became suspect to the party that tyrannises over Spain. He used to go for pleasure-trips on the sea. One day we found in the offing a French brig. We went on board, leaving behind all our property in Carthagena. My husband is still very rich. He has taken a fine mansion at Bordeaux and started in business again. But we live absolutely alone. He will not let me mix in French society. During the last year especially, under the pretext of political difficulties with the Liberals, I have not been allowed to pay two visits anywhere. My husband is the most generous of men, but he suspects all the world and takes a gloomy view of everything.

"Unhappily, he yielded a few months ago at my desire to have a box at the theatre. He chose the worst, and took a box just by the stage, so as not to expose me to the glances of the young men of the town. A troop of Neapolitan riders had just come to Bordeaux. . . . Ah! sir, how you are going to despise me!"

"Madame," replied Lieven, "I am listening to you with attention, but I think only of my misfortune. Your love is fixed for ever on a happier man."

"No doubt you have heard of the famous Mayral?" said Leonora, lowering her eyes.

"The Spanish circus-rider! Yes, all Bordeaux went to see him. He is a very smart, handsome chap."

"Alas! sir, I thought he was a man out of the common. He always looked at me as he rode. One day, passing under my box, from which my husband had just gone, he said, in Catalanian:

"'I am a captain in the army of the Marquesito and I adore you.'

"To be loved by a circus-rider! How shameful, sir! And it was still more shameful that I could think of it without shame. For some days I did not go to the show. I was very unhappy. One morning my chambermaid said to me: 'Senor Ferrandez has gone out; I beg you, madame, to read this letter.' And she hastened away, locking the door behind her. It was a love-letter from Mayral. He told me the story of his life, saying he was a poor officer forced by the direst need into a way of life that he offered to abandon for me. His true name was Don Roderigue Pimentel. I returned to the show. Little by little I believed in the misfortunes of Mayral: I received his letters with pleasure. Alas! I ended by answering them. I loved him with passion—a passion," she said, breaking again into tears, "that nothing can extinguish, not even the saddest of discoveries. I desired as much as he did an opportunity to speak to him. Yet I soon suspected that he was no Pimentel or officer of the army of the Marquesito. He had no pride, and I sometimes saw he was afraid I would laugh at him

for being merely a circus-rider in a troop of acrobats.

" About two months ago, as we were starting for the show, my husband received the news that one of his ships had been wrecked near Royan.

" ' I must go and see it to-morrow,' he said.

" This was unlike him, for usually he did not speak ten words a day. At the show, I gave Mayral a signal we had agreed upon, and while my husband was in the box, Mayral went to our house and took a letter I had left with our porter's wife. I saw Mayral return full of joy. I had had the weakness to write to him that I would see him the next night in the hall by the garden.

" My husband left at noon. It was splendid weather, and the heat was very great. In the evening, I said I would sleep in my husband's room, which was on the ground floor by the garden. At one in the morning, having opened the window, I was waiting for Mayral, when there was a sudden noise at the door. It was my husband. Half way on the road to Royan he had seen his ship quietly sailing up the Gironde towards Bordeaux.

" In entering, Don Gutier did not perceive my dreadful anxiety. He praised my idea of finding a cool room to sleep in, and lay down by my side. Think of my disquietude! Unhappily, the moonlight was very clear. Less than an hour afterwards, I saw Mayral come to the window. After the return of my husband, I had not thought of closing the glass door of the study next to the bedroom. It was wide open, and so was the door that led from the study into the room.

" In vain I tried, by movements of my head, to make Mayral understand that something had happened. I heard him enter the study, and he was soon close to the bed. Think of my terror! Everything could be seen as clearly as in daylight. Happily Mayral did not speak as he drew near.

" I showed him my husband sleeping by my side. He drew a dagger. Horrified, I half raised myself. He leaned over and said in my ear:

" ' I see I come at an awkward hour. You may have found it pleasant to make a fool of a poor circus-rider, but this handsome gentleman is going to have a bad time.'

" ' This is my husband,' I whispered, while with all my strength I held his hand.

" ' I saw your husband go on the steamer to Royan this morning! An acrobat isn't such a fool as to believe that. Come and speak to me in the next room. I insist!—otherwise I will wake this fine gentleman. I am stronger and quicker and better armed, and I will show him that it is not good to jest with me. I want you, and he shall not have you '

" At this moment my husband awoke."

" ' Who is that speaking ? ' he cried, greatly disturbed.

" Mayral, who was holding me and speaking in my ear, lowered himself quickly. I stretched out my arm as though my husband's words had aroused me : I said several things to him that made Mayral clearly see it was my husband. At last Don Gutier, thinking he had been disturbed by a dream, went to sleep again. The blade of Mayral's dagger continued to gleam in the rays of the moon, which were now shining straight on the bed. I promised Mayral all he wanted, and at the end of an hour he went away.

" Will you believe me, sir, when I tell you that though the foolish action of Mayral made me see what sort of man he was, my passion for him did not diminish ? My husband, never going into society, passed all his time with me. Nothing was more difficult than the second interview that I had sworn to Mayral I would grant him. He wrote letters full of reproaches, and at the theatre he would not look at me. At last, sir, my fatal love carried me completely away.

" ' Come from the Exchange, when you see my husband there.' I wrote to him, ' I will hide you. Then if by any chance I get a moment of freedom I will see you ; and if my husband goes to the Exchange to-morrow, you can see me. Is not this a proof of my love and the injustice of your suspicions ? Think what I am exposing myself to ! '

" He replied that he always feared I should choose some one in good society, and make a fool of the poor Italian acrobat. One of his comrades had told some absurd tale about the matter. Eight days afterwards, my husband went to the Exchange ; Mayral came to me in broad daylight, climbing the garden wall. We had scarcely been three minutes together when my husband returned. Mayral went into my dressing-room ; but Don Gutier had only come back for some papers. Unfortunately, he had also a bag with some valuables. In an idle fit, he would not go down to his strong room, but put the gold in one of my chests in the dressing-room, and locked it, and for extra precaution, as he is very suspicious, he took away the key of my room. Mayral was furious. I could only speak to him through the door.

" My husband soon returned. After dinner, he compelled me to go out for a walk. He wanted to go to the theatre, and it was very late when we got home. All the doors of the house were closed with great care every evening, and my husband took all the keys. It was by the greatest hazard in the world that, profiting by my husband's first sleep, I managed to let Mayral out of the room. I got him into a little attic under the roof. It was impossible to let him out through the garden. Balls of wool had been stretched over it, and two or three porters were set on watch. Myral passed all the following day in the attic. Think of what I suffered ! Every

instant I fancied I saw him coming down, dagger in hand, to murder my husband. He was capable of anything. The least noise in the house startled me.

"To crown my unhappiness, my husband did not go to the Exchange. At last, without having been able to speak for a minute to Mayral, I was able to let him escape through the garden, by giving each of the porters something to do. In passing, he broke the great mirror of the drawing-room with the handle of his dagger. He was furious.

"Here, sir, you will despise me as much as I despise myself. From this moment, I see now, Mayral loved me no longer. He thought I had made a fool of him. My husband was still very fond of me. Several times that day he kissed me and took me in his arms. Mayral, sick with pride rather than with love, fancied I had concealed him so that he could see these transports.

"He would not answer my letters; he would not even look at me at the show. You must be growing tired, sir, of this tale of infamies. Here is the worst and the most dastardly. It is eight days since the Neapolitan troop of riders announced its departure. Last Monday, mad with love for a man who for three weeks had not replied to my letters or looked at me, I left the house of the best of husbands, and, sir, in going away, I, who had brought as dowry only an unfaithful heart—I took the diamonds he gave me, and from his coffer I stole three or four rolls of five hundred francs, thinking that Mayral would be suspected at Bordeaux if he tried to sell diamonds."

At this part of her story, Leonora blushed deeply. Lieven was pale and desperate. Each word of Leonora's pierced his heart, and yet through the frightful perversity of his character, redoubled the passion that burnt in him. Beside himself, he took the hand of Donna Leonora, and she did not draw it away.

"What baseness it is in me," said Lieven to himself, "to play with her hand while she openly speaks to me of her love for another man. Only from disdain or absent-mindedness she lets me do it. I am the least delicate of men."

"Last Sunday, sir," continued Leonora, "towards two in the morning, after drugging my husband and the porter with laudanum, I fled. I came and knocked at the door of the house from which I was escaping when you passed. It is Mayral's.

"'Now will you believe I love you?' I said to him.

"I was wild with happiness. He seemed to me, even from the first, more astonished than loving. The next morning, when I showed him my diamonds and my gold, he resolved to leave the troop and fly with me to Spain. But heavens! I saw from his ignorance of the ways of my country, he was not a Spaniard. I was uniting myself for ever to a circus-rider! 'Well? What did it matter,' I thought, 'so long as he loves me? I feel he is the master

of my life. I shall be his servant, his faithful mate. He will follow his trade. I am young, and if needs be, I will learn trick-riding. If we fall in poverty in our old age, well! in twenty years, I can die by his side. I shall have nothing to complain of. I shall have had my happiness.' What a mad fool I was!" she said, interrupting herself.

"It must be admitted you were dying of weariness with your old husband," said Lieven. "He would not let you mix with people of your own position. This justifies you in my eyes. You were nineteen and he was fifty-nine. How many wives live in high honour in my country who have really done worse things than you, and have none of your generous remorse!"

Several phrases of this sort seemed to lighten the grief of Leonora.

"Sir," she continued, "I spent three days with Mayral. Yesterday evening he said to me:

"'As the police may come and search my house, I will go and deposit your gold and jewels with a good friend.'

"At one o'clock in the morning, when I was frightened to death thinking he had fallen off his horse, he came in, gave me a kiss and soon left the room again. Happily I used a light, though he forbade me to do so. Some long time afterwards, as I was sleeping, a man got in the bed. I knew at once it was not Mayral. I took a dagger, and the coward was afraid and threw himself at my knees begging for mercy.

"'There's the guillotine for you if you touch me!" he said.

"The baseness of the appeal shocked me. With what people had I compromised myself! I had the presence of mind to tell the man I had relatives in Bordeaux, and that I would have him arrested if he did not speak all the truth.

"'Well,' he said, 'I have not stolen any of your gold or your diamonds. Mayral has left Bordeaux with all the spoil. He has gone off with the wife of our manager. He gave him twenty-five of your fine louis to get the woman. He has given me two louis, and there they are, unless you like to let me keep them. He gave me the money to keep you here as long as possible, so that he could get twenty or thirty hours' start.'

"'Is he Spanish?' I asked.

"'Spanish? Him? He comes from San Domingo, and he fled from there after robbing and murdering his master.'

"'Why did he come back this evening?' I said. 'Answer, or my uncle will send you to the galleys!'

"'I hesitated to come here and keep you from going out. Mayral said you were beautiful. He said it would be easy to take his place, and it would avenge him for some trick you had played on him. Then, as I still did not dare to, he brought the postchaise to the door, and came up to kiss you, getting me to hide on the other side of the bed.'"

Leonora's voice was stopped by sobs.

"The young acrobat who was with me," she went on, "was frightened, and gave me true and desolating information about Mayral. I was in despair. 'Perhaps he made me drink a philtre,' I said to myself, 'for I cannot hate him.' Amid all his infamies, sir, I cannot hate him. I feel I adore him!"

Donna Leonora stopped and remained thoughtful.

"Strangely blind!" said Lieven to himself. "A woman with such intelligence and believes in witchcraft!"

"At last," said Leonora, "the young man, seeing I was sunk in thought, began to be less afraid. He left me, and came back with one of his comrades. I was obliged to defend myself. The struggle was serious. Perhaps they wished to take my life. Finally I gained the door; but if you, sir, had not been there, they would probably have pursued me down the street."

The more Lieven saw Leonora maddened with love for Mayral, the more he adored her. She wept, and he kissed her hand. As he was speaking in veiled words of his love:

"Do you believe me, my true friend," she said to him, several days afterwards, "but I think if I could prove to Mayral that I had never tried to make him a dupe or play with him, perhaps he would love me?"

"I haven't much money," said Lieven. "I gamble out of boredom. But may be the banker at Bordeaux, to whom my father recommended me, will not refuse me fifteen or twenty louis. I will do all I can to get it. Do anything! With this money you can go to Paris."

Leonora flung her arms round his neck.

"My God! Why can't I love you? What! You will forgive my horrible folly?"

"To such a point that I would marry you with rapture, and pass my life with you, the happiest of men!"

"But if I meet Mayral, I feel myself weak and criminal enough to leave you, my benefactor, and fall at his feet."

Lieven reddened with anger.

"The only cure for me is to kill myself," he said, covering her with kisses.

"Ah! do not kill yourself, my friend," said Leonora.

He was never seen again. Leonora has entered the convent of the Ursulines.

THE JEW

STENDHAL

" I WAS then a very handsome man."

" But you are still remarkably striking."

" With what a difference! I am forty-five. Then I was only thirty. It was in 1814. All I had were an uncommon figure and a rare beauty. For the rest I was a Jew, despised by you Christians, and by Jews as well. For I had been for a long time excessively poor."

" Men are very wrong in despising——"

" Don't put yourself to the cost of finding pretty phrases. This evening I feel disposed to talk, and when I do talk I am sincere. Our ship is going well; the breeze is delightful; to-morrow morning we shall be in Venice. . . . But to come back to the story of the curse about which we were speaking, and of my travels in France in 1814. I was very fond of money in 1814. It is the only passion I have ever known in myself.

" I spent my days in the streets of Venice with a little box, on the top of which some golden jewels were displayed; but in a secret drawer I had cotton stockings, handkerchiefs, and other contraband English goods. One of my uncles, after the burial of my father, said to each of us—we were three—that there remained a capital only of five francs. This good uncle gave me a napoleon—twenty francs. In the night my mother decamped with twenty-one francs; that left me only four francs. I stole from one of the neighbours a violin-case I knew she had put in the garret. I went and bought eight handkerchiefs of red cotton. They cost me ten sous; I sold them for eleven. The first day I sold out all my stock four times. I hawked my handkerchiefs among the sailors by the arsenal. The merchant, astonished by my activity, asked me why I did not buy my goods by the dozen. It was a good half a league from his shop to the arsenal. I told him I only had four francs in the world, that my mother had stolen twenty-one francs from me. He gave me a very hard kick that lifted me out of the shop.

" Still, the next day I was back again. I had already sold the eight handkerchiefs the evening before. As it was a warm night I slept out of doors. I had lived, I had drunk Chio wine, and I had saved five sous out of my trade. That was the life I led from 1800 to 1814. I seemed to work under the blessing of God."

The Jew uncovered himself with a tender air.

"I was so good at the trade that several times I doubled my capital in a single day. Often I took a gondola and went to sell stockings to sailors on the ships. But, as soon as I had put by a little money, my mother and my sister found a pretext for making friends with me again, and robbing me. Once they took me to a jeweller's shop, put on a necklace and earrings, and went out, as for a moment, and never came back. The jeweller wanted fifty francs from me. I began to weep. I had only fourteen francs on me. I told him where my box was. He sent for it; but, while I was wasting time at the jeweller's, my mother had also gone off with the box. The jeweller gave me a good thrashing.

"When he was tired of beating me, I explained to him that if he would give me back my fourteen francs and lend me a little table drawer, in which I could fix a double bottom, I could certainly pay him back ten sous a day. And this is what I did. The jeweller ended by trusting me with earrings worth twenty francs; but he never allowed me to gain more than five sous on each piece.

"In 1805 I had a capital of a thousand francs. Then I considered that our law orders us to marry, and I thought of accomplishing my duty. I had the misfortune to fall in love with a Jewish girl named Stella. She had two brothers; one of them was quartermaster-sergeant among the French troops, and the other cashier at the paymaster's. They often pushed her at night out of the room they occupied in common, on the ground-floor on the side of San Paolo. I found her there one evening, weeping. Mistaking what she was, I offered to buy her ten sous' worth of Chio wine. Her tears increased. Telling her she was a fool, I walked on.

"But she struck me as very pretty. Next night, at the same hour—ten—my sales in Saint Mark's Place were finished, and I passed by the spot where I had met her. She was not there. Three days afterwards I was luckier. I had a long talk with her. She refused me with horror.

"'She has seen me go by with my box filled with jewels,' I thought. 'She wants me to make her a present of one of my necklaces, and that's what I won't do!'

"I resolved not to take the street any more. But in spite of myself, and almost without admitting it, I gave up drinking wine, and each day I set apart the money I thus saved. I was still more foolish not to use this money in trade. In that time, sir, I tripled my capital every week.

"When I had saved twelve francs—the price of my cheapest necklaces—I went several times down the street where Stella lived. At last I saw her. She rejected my gallant advances with indignation. In our talk I told her I had stopped drinking wine for three months to save the cost of one of my necklaces and offer it to her.

She did not reply, but asked my advice on a misfortune that had happened to her since she last saw me.

" Her brothers worked together at clipping any golden coins they could procure. (They plunged the sequins and napoleons in a bath of *aqua fortis*.) The quartermaster-sergeant had been put in prison ; and for fear of rousing suspicions, the cashier at the paymaster's would not take any steps to help him. Stella did not ask me to go to the citadel ; and for my part I never mentioned the place, but I begged her to wait for me the next evening. . . ."

" But we are still very far," I said, " from the curse that overcame you in France."

" You are right," said the Jew, " but I promise to finish in a few words the story of my marriage, or be silent. I don't know why I like to talk to-day of Stella.

" At some trouble, I got the quartermaster brother out of prison. They gave me the hand of their sister, and brought their father to Venice—a poor Jew of Innsbruck. I had rented some rooms, happily paid in advance, and had collected some bits of furniture there. My father-in-law went among all his relatives in the city announcing he was marrying his daughter. At last, after a year of anxieties, on the eve of the marriage, he made off with six hundred francs he had collected from his relatives. We were going, his daughter and he and I, to eat a salad at Murano. That was when he disappeared. Meanwhile, my two brothers-in-law stole every bit of the furniture in my room, and unfortunately the stuff was not all paid for.

" My credit was ruined. My brothers-in-law, whom folks had always seen with me, had told the merchants with whom I dealt that I was at Chiozzia, where I was selling anything I wanted. In a word, by all kinds of trickeries, they had stolen more than two hundred francs. I saw it was necessary to fly from Venice. I placed Stella as nursemaid with the jeweller who had trusted me with the necklaces. Early the next morning, having given Stella twenty francs, keeping only six myself, I fled.

" Never had I been so ruined. For I now seemed a thief. Happily, in my despair, I had the idea, on reaching Padua, to write the truth to the merchants of Venice from whom my wife's brothers had taken the goods. I learned next day there was an order out for my arrest, and the police of the kingdom of Italy were not to be trifled with.

" A famous lawyer of Padua had become blind. He wanted a valet to lead him about, but his misfortune made him so ill-tempered that he never kept a man more than a month. But I wagered with myself that I would not be driven out of his house. I entered his service, and the next day, as he was bored that nobody came to see him, I told him my story.

" ' If you do not protect me,' I said, ' I shall be arrested one of these days.'

" ' Arrest one of my servants ! ' he exclaimed, ' I should soon stop that ! '

" At last, sir, I won his favour. He went to bed early, and I obtained permission to do a little trade in the cafés of Padua, from eight o'clock, when he went to bed, to two o'clock in the morning, when the rich people left the cafés.

" I made two hundred francs in eighteen months. I asked to go. He told me that in his will he was leaving me a considerable sum of money, but that I must never leave his house.

" ' In that case,' I thought, ' why did you let me trade ? '

" I decamped. I paid my creditors at Venice. This brought me much honour. I married Stella. I taught her to trade. Now she can sell better than I can. At last I come to the story of my travels, and after that to the curse.

" I had more than a hundred louis capital. I must tell you the story of a new reconciliation with my mother, who stole from me again, and then got my sister to rob me. So I left Venice, seeing that, as long as I was there, I should be the dupe of my family. I settled at Zara, where I got on wonderfully. A Croatian captain, whom I had furnished with part of the clothes of his regiment, said to me one day :

" ' Filippo ! do you want to make a fortune ? We are going to France. Learn one thing ; that is, without seeming to be, I am the friend of Baron Bradal, the colonel of the regiment. Come with us as sutler. You will earn a good deal. But this business will only be a pretext. The colonel, with whom I seem to be on bad terms, has given me all the provisioning of the regiment. I want an intelligent man. You will suit me.'

" Now, you see, sir, I did not love my wife any more."

" What ! Poor Stella, to whom you had been so faithful ? "

" The fact is, sir, I loved nothing but money. Ah, I was very fond of that ! "

I began to laugh ; there was such true passion in his exclamation.

" I was made sutler to the regiment. I left Zara. After a march of forty-eight days we reached the Simplon. The five hundred francs I had brought with me had become already fifteen hundred francs, and besides I had a pretty covered cart and two horses. At the Simplon our sufferings began. I almost lost my life. I spent more than twenty-two nights sleeping in the open air in the cold."

" Ah," I said, " you were compelled to bivouac ! "

" I made each day fifty to sixty francs, but every night I was in danger of being frozen. At last the army got over the frightful mountain, and we arrived at Lausanne. There I entered into partnership with Monsieur Perrin. Ah, the worthy man ! He was

a brandy merchant. I knew how to sell in six different languages, while he was good at buying. Ah, the excellent man! Only he was too violent. When a Cossack would not pay for his drink, if he was alone in the shop, Perrin thrashed him till he bled.

"'But my friend,' I used to say to him, 'we are making a hundred francs a day. What does it matter if a drunkard does us out of a couple of francs?'

"'I cannot help it,' he answered; 'I do not like Cossacks.'

"'You will get us murdered. Then, Monsieur Perrin, it will be better to end our partnership.'

"The French vivandiers would not venture in our camp, for no one paid them. We did splendid business. On reaching Lyons we had fourteen thousand francs in our coffers. There, out of pity for the poor French merchants, I went in for smuggling. There was a great deal of tobacco outside Saint Clair gate. They came and begged me to get it into the town. I told them to be patient for a couple of days, until my friend the colonel was in command. Then for five days I filled my covered cart with tobacco. The Frenchmen at the gate grumbled, but did not dare to arrest me. On the fifth day, one of them, who was drunk, attacked me. I whipped on my horse, but the others stopped me. I was bleeding all over, and demanded I should be led before the commander of the guard. He belonged to our regiment, but would not recognise me, and sent me to prison. While going to prison I gave two crowns to my escort to lead me before my colonel. In the presence of the soldiers he treated me very harshly and threatened to hang me. As soon as we were alone he said:

"'Cheer up! to-morrow I will put another officer at the gate. Instead of one cart, bring in two.'

"But I would not. I gave him two hundred sequins.

"'What!' he said to me, 'do you take such a lot of trouble for nothing?"

"'I am sorry for the poor merchants,' I replied.

"Our affairs—Perrin's and mine—went admirably as far as Dijon. There, sir, in one night we lost more than twelve thousand francs. The sales had been splendid. It was a grand review, and we were the only vivandiers. We had a net gain of more than a thousand francs. At midnight, when everybody was sleeping, a cursed Croatian would not pay up. Perrin, seeing he was alone, overwhelmed him with blows, and covered him with blood.

"'You are mad,' I said. 'It is true this man has drunk six francs' worth; but if he has the strength to use his voice there will be a row.'

"The Croatian tumbled like a dead man out of our shop, but he was only stupefied. He began to shout. Some soldiers, bivouacking close by, came up, and, finding him covered with blood, broke in

our door. Perrin tried to defend himself, and got eight sabre wounds.

" ' I am not guilty,' I said to the soldiers. ' He did it. Take me to your colonel ! '

" ' We will not wake the colonel for you,' said one of the soldiers.

" In spite of my efforts, our unhappy shop was attacked by some thousands of soldiers. The officers outside the mob could not get through and use their authority. I thought that Perrin was dead : I was in a pitiable condition myself. At last, sir, they pillaged us of more than twelve hundred francs' worth of wine and brandy.

" At daybreak, I succeeded in escaping. My colonel gave me four men to rescue Perrin if he were still alive. I found him in a guard-room, and took him to a surgeon.

" ' We must separate, my friend,' I said. ' You will end in getting me killed.'

" But he insisted so much, that we started a second partnership, paying some soldiers to guard our shop. In two months we made twelve thousand francs each. Unhappily, Perrin killed in a duel one of the soldiers who were guarding us.

" ' You will get me killed,' I repeated, and I left him.

" I went to Lyons, where I bought watches and diamonds, which were then cheap. For I am well up in all sorts of business. If you dropped me into any country, with fifty francs in my pocket, in six months I would have lived well and tripled my capital. I hid my diamonds in a secret place I made in my cart. The regiment having left for Valence and Avignon, I followed it after staying three days in Lyons.

" But, sir, when I got to Valence at eight in the evening, it was raining and dark. I knocked at the door of an inn. I was told there was no room for a Cossack. I knocked again. They flung stones at me from the upper window.

" ' It is clear,' I said to myself, ' I shall die to-night in this accursed town.'

" No one would answer : and no one would act as guide. I saw that if I did not want to die, I should have to sacrifice some of my goods. I gave a glass of brandy to the sentry. He was a Hungarian. Hearing me speak his language, he took pity on me, and told me to wait until he was relieved. I was perishing with cold : at last his relief came. I treated the corporal and all the men, and they led me to the commander. Ah, what a gentleman, sir ! He called me in at once. I explained to him that, out of hatred to the king, no inn-keeper would give me a night's lodging for any money.

" ' Very well,' he cried, ' they shall lodge you for nothing.'

" He gave me a fine billet for two nights, and four men were told off to accompany me. I returned to the inn, where they had thrown stones at me. I knocked twice. I said, in French, I had four men

with me, and we would break in the door if it were not opened. No answer. We found a great piece of wood and began to break down the door. It was half broken through when a man opened it angrily. He was a tall fellow—six feet high—with a sabre in one hand and a candle in the other. I thought there was going to be a row and my cart would be pillaged. So, though I had a lodging billet, I cried:

"'I will pay in advance, sir, if you like.'

"'Ah, it is you, Filippo!' cried the man, lowering his sabre and embracing me. 'What: don't you remember Bonnard, corporal of the twentieth regiment?'

"I embraced him in turn, and sent the soldiers away. Bonnard had lodged with my father for six months at Vicenza.

"'I am dying of hunger,' I said. 'For three days I have been wandering about Valence.'

"'I will awaken my servant and soon get you a good supper.'

"He embraced me again, and was never tired of looking at me and questioning me. I went with him to the cellar, from which he brought an excellent wine that he kept in sand. As we were drinking while waiting for supper, a tall handsome girl of eighteen came in.

"'Ah, you have got up!' said Bonnard. 'So much the better. Friend, this is my sister! You must marry her! You are a nice boy, and I will give her a dowry of six hundred francs.

"'I am married already,' I said to him. 'I have a wife at Zara, where she is in business.'

"'Let her go to the devil, with her business. Settle yourself in France—and marry the prettiest girl in the town.'

"Catherine was really very pretty. She looked at me in wonder.

"'You are an officer?' she said, deceived by a fine pelisse bought at the review at Dijon.

"'No, mademoiselle, I am a vivandier to the army, and I have made two hundred louis. I assure you there are not many of our officers with that money.' I had more than six hundred louis, but I am always very prudent.

"At last, will you believe it, sir? Bonnard would not let me go any farther. He rented for me a little shop by the side of the guard-room, near the gate, where I did business with our soldiers. And though I did not follow the army any longer, there were days when I still made my ten francs. Bonnard was always saying to me: 'You must marry my sister.' Little by little Catherine got into the habit of coming to my little shop, and spending three or four hours there. At last, sir, I got madly in love with her. She was still more in love with me. But by God's grace we did not lose our senses.

"'How can you want me to marry you?' I said to her. 'I am married.'

"'Haven't you left your Italian wife all your stock? Let her

live on it at Zara, and you stay with us. Go into partnership with my brother, or keep your own business on. You are doing well and you will still do better.'

"I must tell you, sir, I was going in for banking business at Valence, and by buying good bills on Lyons, signed by men whom Bonnard knew, I sometimes made a hundred or a hundred and twenty francs a week in this way alone. So I remained in Valence until the autumn. I did not know what to do. I was dying to marry Catherine, and I had given her a dress and a hat from Lyons. When we went out walking together, her brother, she and I, everybody had their eyes on Catherine. She was really the most beautiful girl I have seen in my life.

"'If you will not marry me,' she would often say, 'I will be your servant. Only you must never leave me.'

"She went ahead of me to my shop, to save me the trouble of opening it. At last, sir, I was absolutely mad in love with her, and she was the same as regards me, but we were always good. At the end of autumn the allies left Valence.

"'The inn-keepers of this town might murder me,' I said to Bonnard. 'They know I have made some money here.'

"'Go if you will,' said Bonnard with a sigh. 'We will not force anybody. But if you will stay and marry my sister, I will give her half of my property, and if any one says anything about you, leave him to me.'

"Three times I put off the day of my departure. The last troops of the rear-guard were already at Lyons when I resolved to go. We spent the night weeping, Catherine, her brother, and myself. You see, sir, I lost my happiness by not remaining with this family. God would not permit me to be happy!

"At last I set off, the 7th of November 1814. I shall never forget that day. I could not guide my cart. I was obliged to engage a driver half-way between Valence and Vienne. The day after my departure, as I was harnessing my horse at Vienne, who should arrive at the inn?—Catherine! She at once folded me in her arms. She was known in the inn, and she pretended to have come to see an aunt of hers in the town.

"'I want to go with you as your servant,' she repeated, the tears rolling down her face. 'If you will not take me, I will throw myself in the Rhône.'

"All the people in the inn gathered round us. Catherine, who was as a rule so reserved and never said anything, talked and wept without restraint, and kissed me before them all. I got her quickly on my cart and drove away. A quarter of a league from the town I stopped.

"'Here we must say good-bye,' I said to her.

"She never spoke, and clutched her head in her hands with

convulsive movements. I was afraid. I saw she would throw herself in the river, if I sent her back.

" ' But I am married,' I repeated to her. ' Married before God,' I said.

" ' I know it quite well. I will be your servant.'

" Ten times I stopped my cart between Vienne and Lyons : but she would not consent to leave me.

" ' If I pass the bridge of the Rhône with her,' I said to myself, ' it will be the sign of the will of God.'

" At last, sir, without noticing it, I passed the bridge and reached Lyons. At the inn they took us for husband and wife, and gave us a single room. I started to trade in watches and diamonds, and made ten francs a day ; and, thanks to the admirable housekeeping of Catherine, we lived on less than four. I took some rooms, which we furnished very well. I then possessed thirteen thousand francs, which in the banking business brought me in about eighteen hundred francs. Never have I been so rich as in the year and a half spent with Catherine. I was so rich that I bought a little pleasure-carriage, and every Sunday we went for excursions outside the town.

" A Jew of my acquaintance came to see me one day, and got me to take him in my carriage some way from Lyons. There he said suddenly to me :

" ' Filippo, you have a wife and a son ! they are unhappy.'

" Then he gave me a letter from my wife, and disappeared. I came back alone to Lyons. The letter from my wife was filled with reproaches that touched me much less than the idea of my abandoned son. I saw from the letter that the business at Zara was going on fairly well . . . but to abandon my son ! The idea hurt me.

" All that evening I did not speak. Catherine remarked it, but she had such a good heart ! Three weeks went by without her asking me the reason of my sadness.

" ' I have a son,' I said, when she at last spoke.

" ' I guessed it,' she said to me. ' Let us go. I will be your servant at Zara.'

" ' Impossible. My wife knows everything. Look at her letter.'

" Catherine blushed very much at the insults my wife addressed to her, at the tone of scorn with which, without knowing her, my wife spoke of her. I embraced her, and did all I could to console her, but, sir, the three months I spent at Lyons after that fatal letter were hellish. I could not come to a decision.

" ' If I set off at once ! ' I said to myself one night, with Catherine sleeping by my side. As soon as the idea struck me, I felt a balm spreading through my soul. ' It must be an inspiration from God ! ' I said to myself. But then, as I looked at Catherine, I began to

say: 'What madness! I cannot do that.'

"So the grace of God abandoned me, and I fell back into my bitter sorrowful mood. Without knowing what I did, I began to dress quietly, my eyes always fixed on Catherine. All my wealth was hidden in the bed. There were five hundred francs in a desk, for a payment she had to pay for a debt in my absence. I took this money; I went to the coach-house where my cart was kept; I hired a horse, and set off.

"At every moment I turned my head. 'Catherine will follow me,' I said to myself. 'If I see her, I am lost.'

"To get a little peace, I took the coach two leagues from Lyons. In my trouble I arranged with a carter to take my cart to chambéry: I evidently had no need of it. I can't remember any more what determined my actions. I felt all the bitterness of my loss on reaching Chambéry. I went to a notary and made a deed of gift of all my property at Lyons to Madame Catherine Bonnard, my wife. I thought of her honour, and of the gossip of neighbours.

"After the notary was paid and I came outside with my deed, I felt I should never have the strength to write to Catherine. I returned to the notary: he wrote a letter to her in my name, and one of his clerks came to the post and sent the letter off in my presence. In a dark tavern, I also had a letter written to Bonnard in Valence. He was informed in my name of the deed of gift, that amounted at least to thirteen thousand francs. He was also told that his sister was lying very ill at Lyons, and was expecting him. I sent this letter off myself. Never since have I heard anything of them.

"I found my cart at the foot of Mont Cenis. I cannot recall why I stuck to this vehicle, which was the immediate cause of my misfortunes. The true cause was no doubt some terrible curse that Catherine launched against me. Lively and passionate as she was, young (she was then just twenty), beautiful, innocent, for she had had no weakness except for me whom she wished to serve and honour as her husband, her voice probably reached to God in a prayer for my severe punishment.

"I bought a passport and a horse. I do not know how I stopped to think at the foot of Mont Cenis that there was a frontier there. I had an idea of doing a little smuggling with my five hundred francs. I bought some watches, which I concealed. Passing proudly before the custom-house officers, I was called to stop. Having done so much smuggling in my life, I carried my head high. The custom-house men went straight to my hiding-place in the cart: probably I had been betrayed by the watchmakers. They took my watches, and fined me besides a hundred crowns. I gave them fifty francs; they let me go.

"This misfortune shook me up. In a moment I was reduced

from five hundred francs to a hundred francs. I could sell the horse and the cart, but it was a long way from Mont Cenis to Zara. As I was tormented by these sinister thoughts, a custom-house man ran up to me crying :

" ' Dog of a Jew, you must give me twenty francs ! The others have tricked me, and given me five francs instead of ten, and I have had all the trouble of catching up to you.'

" It was almost dark ; the man was drunk ; and he insulted me, and seized me by the collar. Satan tempted me, and I stabbed him with my knife, and flung him into the torrent twenty feet below the road. It was the first crime of my life, and I said to myself, ' I am done for ! '

" Nearing Suze, I heard a noise behind me. I put my horse at the gallop. He got his head, and I was not able to hold him back : the cart upset, and I broke my leg.

" ' Catherine has cursed me,' I thought. ' Heaven is just. I shall be recognised and hanged in two months.'

" But, as you see, nothing of the sort happened."